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UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 001202

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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DEPARTMENT FOR G/IWI

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KPAO KWMN PHUM PREL

SUBJECT: EMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN ACTIVITIES TO COMBAT
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

REF: SECSTATE 142614

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

(U) 1. Strategic Speaker Initiative speaker Vivian Huelgo, Director of the Community Law Project at the Sanctuary for Families Center for Battered Women's Legal Services, conducted an extensive series of interviews, seminars, and meetings in Trinidad and Tobago December 2 through 7, inclusive, to commemorate the 16 Days of Action to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls.

(U) 2. Ms. Huelgo presented a training session on the handling and processing of domestic violence cases December 4 for 75 members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service; all ranks were represented. She led a seminar December 5 at the University of the West Indies' Center for Gender and Development on eliminating violence against women and girls for an audience of academics, students, and media. Finally, she made a presentation December 6 at the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago on legal aid in domestic violence cases, and discussed reform of the family court system in Trinidad and Tobago. A total of 64 judges, magistrates, and other distinguished legal figures attended.

(U) 3. In addition, Ms. Huelgo met on December 2 with Diana Mahabir-Wyatt of the Coalition Against Domestic Violence, on December 3 with representatives of seven human rights and women's rights NGOs, and on December 4 with newly-appointed Attorney General Bridgid Anisette-George to discuss the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's new Domestic Violence legislation.

(U) 4. Extensive media coverage included a December 3 interview on channel CNC3's "Early Morning" news program, an early morning television interview December 6 on CNMG, and a taping December 7 on CCN of an interview that aired December 9 and 10. The "Trinidad Express" newspaper ran a cover story and three page interview that appeared December 9, and the "Newsday" newspaper conducted a lengthy interview that has yet to appear.

(SBU) 5. Comment: Violence against women is a serious and endemic problem in Trinidad and Tobago; there are frequent media reports of women who are either killed by abusive men or who kill their abusers while defending themselves. Ms. Huelgo's activities were eagerly welcomed and were attended with interest and enthusiasm. End Comment.

AUSTIN